

UPSTAIRS BULLETIN

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Chicago, Illinois

An Educational Group

When JOAN LAWSON arrives from London we hope the Spring cleaning will all be in the past. Granted we have a large crew but two floors 30 x 120 feet is a lot of space for dirt to collect. Chicago is again entitled to its former name "The Windy City" this year. Great wind storms have played havoc breaking our third floor windows and others on Madison Street. Mind you, the wind is useful in blowing away the pollution from our neighbor - Indiana. By the time March arrives we have had all we want of winter. Those optimists, the cardinals, outside my window at home are really objectionably enthusiastic about the arrival of spring. We are lucky to have it by May in Illinois.

BILL REILLY had the formal opening of his new studio in Milwaukee March 16th. The work he and his wife, Shirley, have done on remodeling an old building into a beautiful studio is nothing short of miraculous. It is in an area being restored into an Old World German style. Maders restaurant seems to be responsible for the restoration. VI & SAL BADOLATO drove us up for the occasion. BILL & SISTER SHEILA have developed a tremendous following in the Beer City and when his law suit is over with the Conservatory of Music he should have clear sailing.

This month the interest in our school will be on teachers. Teachers will be attending the Lawson course from New York, Maryland, Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Oklahoma and Illinois. The school is very proud of the teachers it has produced over the years. Alumni teachers are spread from Alaska to Arizona and from California to the east coast. There will be a display of photographs of many of these teachers during the next month.

It is amazing how the young ones do get around today. Since the first of the year members of our young troupe have had far away mid-season vacations that are worthy of summer. TRACEY HUNTLEY to Hawaii, SCOTT SCHLEXER to Mexico and now DAN & DIANE REILY to Munich Germany. In our day we were lucky to get across the border into Mexico - yet PAT CUMMINGS and PAT HEIM had their first job on a trip around the world with Rod Alexander. I had to wait until I was 60 to get to Europe. I do think that the older person gets more out of and appreciates the travel more than the young ones.

The May concerts have grown a bit in stature since the last Bulletin. DOLORES LIPINSKI will dance with ANNA DROGOSZEWSKA and DIANE REILY in a revival of MR. STONE'S beautiful "Ballade" to the music of Gottschalk. JUDITH SVALANDER and ANNA will again be the soloists in "Lilacs" and DEAN BADOLATO will return to Chicago to dance "Gymnos". He will also dance the "Bluebird Variations" with THERESA KIM, the charming Korean girl who was with us when she first came to this country. This may be the last year for JUDITH BARDIS who will be at Skidmore College this fall with Melissa Hayden. Also graduating will be TRACEY HUNTLEY and DARLENE CALLAGHAN. NANCY GLYNN should be on her way this summer or autumn. For another year we will have DIANE REILY, DEBORAH RIDLEY, MARY RANDOLPH and younger INES LAIMNIS. Some very promising boys are on their way up - CHRISTOPHER and DAVID ADAMS, RANDY MELE, DAN REILY, SCOTT SCHLEXER and from the younger set PAPO SERRANO who will be seen for the first time in "The Proper Playmate". Our apologies to NANCY GLYNN for not having her name on the flier as a soloist. She is indeed prominent in the "Emperor Waltz" and the new "MOZART VARIATIONS".

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THE IMPORTANCE OF READING.

Of all the inanimate objects, of all men's creations, books are the nearest to us, for they contain our very thought, our ambitions, our indignations, our illusions, our fidelity to truth and our persistent learning toward error. But most of all they resemble us in their precarious hold on life.

Joseph Conrad

It is highly important for a dance student to have a peripheral knowledge of all the other arts along with their dance education. One cannot just know one. They are interrelated and each is dependent on the other. Dance, because it deals with a personal ego can become extremely self centered and ingrown. When this happens progress will go only to a certain point. From painting, one can get an appreciation and love for color; from sculpture and architecture, a sense of line and design; from music, feeling and expression. An interest in all makes a rounded and more complete artist. Reading, will bring the arts into focus, enriching the reader's mind and work.

No doubt, required reading in school often kills the incentive to read. When a student is forced to read a half dozen books in a given time, it is doubtful how much good they will get out of it - or pleasure. And pleasure there must be. A good reader will savor each beautifully worded phrase and thought as they read, often rereading certain passages over and over again. Herman Heese says it perfectly in this line - "Thoughtless, absent reading is very much like walking blindfold through beautiful country."

A student of dance obsessed with a technical problem like pirouettes or developing an extension, sees no reason to waste time on reading. There is such a thing as an extension of the mind. This could lead to greater possibilities, possibly into being a creator or an innovator. And in the end would be of greater import than pirouettes. With a well-planned program of reading the dancer can gain a peripheral knowledge of his profession and gather a backlog of information that would be useful in later life; he can gain the knowledge and understanding from the lives of great artists of the past; socially he will improve his conversation and vocabulary; he will re-sensitize his senses and develop an imagination for interpretation in

performances; he will develop a critical ability and improve his taste; he may even become more observing and aware of the world around him; it will help him to understand himself which often takes a lifetime to achieve; reading will make him more responsive to artistic values and develop an ability to analyze his thoughts and those of others; by contemplation and thoughtful observation he may become more receptive to new impressions and ideas. Again in the words of Hesse - "The purpose of books is not to make dependent people more dependent, much less to provide those incapable of living with an easy, artificial substitute for life. On the contrary, books have value only if they lead to life and make for a better life; every hour spent reading is a waste of time unless it gives the reader a spark of strength, an intimation of new youth, a breath of fresh air."

People will say they have no time to read anything but the news, and yet, if they were to account for each hour they would find more wasted hours than used ones. One can discipline oneself into making better use of time. I don not remember when I began my early morning habit of reading. I arise at 5 A.M. and read with coffee for at least an hour each day. I choose my reading carefully and I can read from twenty to twenty-five books a year using this time. I do not intend to be pretentious or boastful in writing this article, I only wish to stress how much one can do if one devotes just a few moments each day to it.

In my early teens I was a captive reader and in our home we had three sets of great books - Shakespeare, Tennyson and George Eliot. They were seldom opened by myself or my brothers. I did sample the Tennyson and liked "The Lotus Eaters" and his poems even more. But I did use the local library for my odd assortment of reading which included any medical book I could lay my hands on, books on Agriculture and ecology, Frederick O'Brien's books on the South Seas, Harold Bell Wright's novels (was fond of "The Shepherd of the Hills"), Vincent Blasco Ibanez, who wrote many stories that were made into movies ("The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse", "Blood and Sand" and others), anything about Rasputin and his involvement with the Czar and Czarina, the Philosophers, Spinoza, Kant, and Schopenhauer, James Cabell

Branch (famous for "Jurgen") and about this time I became interested in Dr. Annie Besant and her protegee Krishnamurti (whom I still read). Just name it - I read it - Zane Grey, Will Rogers, James Huneker, George Moore. I still think Moore was excellent and up until his autobiographical work, "Memoirs of My Dead Life" and "Hail and Farewell" I read him completely. As I look over that list - it was not bad for a teenager, at least I was reading.

When I came to Chicago I decided that there was no point of view in my reading, it was leading no where. I was reading to entertain my self when I should be reading for substance and knowledge. The Chicago Public Library at that time offered reading courses (today they do not), so after some consideration I selected one on American Literature. In no time I was thoroughly committed and involved for the next fifteen years. I cannot remember the introductory book but I do remember the book that impressed me the most. It was Van Wyck Brook's "The Flowering of New England". I soon read all his books up through "New England Indian Summer". By this time my reading was planned for years ahead. From the earliest American writers, William Prescott, William Ellery Channing and Bronson Alcott, I went into the biographies and works of Franklin, Irving, Whittier, Longfellow, Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne and others. They occupied me up to Walt Whitman and Henry Adams. The latter's "The Education of Henry Adams" was an important chapter in my reading experience.

In the past 25 years new authors have taken up my interest. Mainly they have been Steinbeck, Gide, Kazantzakis, Mishima, Berenson, Krutch, Ransaul, Camus, and Hesse. The newly discovered Japanese writers engrossed much of my attention - Kawabata, Yasushi Inoue, Saikaku, Ihara and of course Mishima from beginning to end. On our recent trip to Ireland I discovered Walter Mearns who writes fascinating stories of the Irish people and their history. His story "God Made Sunday" was the one that started my buying every book of his I could find. Gabriel Garcia Marquez, a Columbian author is another I am searching for after reading "One Hundred Years of Solitude" and "No one Writes to the Colonel".

It is impossible to mention everything one reads but some books influence one's life and thinking more than others. The following list meant much to me:

The Meditation of Marchu Aurelius.

Emerson's Essays

Montaign's Essays

Amiel's Journal

The Following of Christ, by Thomas A. Kempis

Ulysses, by James Joyce (a monument of aesthetic planning and perseverance)

The Measure of Man, by Joseph Wood Krutch

The Art of Teaching, by Gilbert Highet

And the lives of Michael Angelo, Brahms,

Mozart, Franklin and Lincoln.

I have friends who can recite every detail in a book they read ten years back. These readers bore me instead of upsetting me in that I do not remember as much. What I read seems to go into a common storehouse of impressions, ideas and moods, coming to the surface now and then in conversation or a thought. It does not shame me because even Montaigne speaks of "a little treachery and defect in his memory" that brings great authors words into his own conversation as his own. If one borrows, "borrow from a good source". He too, read "to know the souls and sincere judgements of his favorite authors." Shopenhauer wrote in a similar vein - "reading is thinking with someone else's head instead of one's own."

Books are marvelous possessions that sometime can become a great chore and care, almost smothering one's other possessions. From time to time I decide to dispose of some and end up putting them all back, one at a time, on the shelf, in a closet, under a table or on a chair about the room.

I enjoy having other people read my books but have a very low opinion of the person who forgets to return them. The wife of a well-known critic in Chicago once borrowed my two volumes of Carl Sandburg's "The Prairie Years" and as time went on they were not returned. Because they had been a present along with "The War Years" from the cast of the Oklahoma Company I valued them and wanted them back. I called several times and finally was told to call for them on a certain day - and that day she was not at home. A young mother borrowed by "Infant Development" by Dr. Arnold Gesell when she had her first child, she has had another since and I still do not have the book. We once began a library in the studio with about 200 books, all on dance. In six months time they had all disappeared. Recently I discovered that my "Gide's Journals" was

missing. I remember vaguely loaning them - but to whom? It is not that I am selfish about them but I often reread them and like to find my underlined passages.

For the dance student, there is little reading of worth on dance. To many of the late books are merely glorifying personalities with little or nothing to do with the "dance" itself. Agnes De Mille's little book "To a Young Dancer", while full of errors is still a dance book with much good advice for the novice and the parent. In the Dance periodicals there is really only one "Dance Perspectives" published in New York.

The following list of books have merit:

1. Theory and Practice of Classic Dance
by Carlo Blasis
2. Noverre's Letters
3. The Mastery of Movement
by Rudolph Laban
4. World History of Dance
by Kurt Sachs
5. The Dance of Life
by Havelock Ellis
6. A Pagaent of Dance and Ballet
by Perugini
7. Fundamentals of Classic Dance
by Vagonova
8. Angna Enter on "Mime"
9. Technical Manual
by Gail Grant
10. European Folk Dance
by Joan Lawson
11. Ballet Technique
by Karsavina
12. The Flow of Movement
by Karsavina
13. Ballet - An Illustrated History
by Mary Clarke

14. A History of Ballet and its Makers

by Joan Lawson

15. There is a History of Dance
by Lincoln Kirsten which seems to be out of print.

There are amusing books on dance that the average person does not come in touch with - here are a few, try and find them.

1. Dancing for Diaghilev - The Memoirs of Lydia Sokolova
by Richard Buckle
2. Artists Life
by Angna Enters
3. Fanny Ellsler
by Ivor Guest
4. Era of the Russian Ballet
by Natalia Roslavleva
5. The Romantic Ballet in England
by Ivor Guest
6. Anton Dolin's Autobiography for his reminscing and gossop.